Policies to boost rural and religious tourism

†4067. SHRI BASHISTHA NARAIN SINGH: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of Government policies to boost rural as well as religious tourism;

(b) whether in order to boost domestic tourism alongwith foreign tourism, the updated brochure on the existing places of mythical and religious importance would be made available at various tourist centres by Government; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government so far for the publicity of such information alongwith details of policies to be adopted in future?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) Creation of infrastructure in rural areas having potential for tourism is being supported under the existing scheme of destination development, while community participation and Capacity Building including skill upgradation in such rural areas are being supported through GOI-UNDP Endogenous Tourism Project. Religious Tourism is promoted as part of cultural tourism.

(b) and (c) Promotion and publicity of existing places of mythological, cultural and religious importance is part of the promotional programme involving production of tourist literature on different destinations which are distributed free of charge through India Tourism Offices in India and abroad as well as through tour operators and participation in travel fairs and exhibitions.

Vacant post of Director in the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

4068. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) since when the post of Director of Nehru Memorial Museum and Library has been lying vacant and reasons therefor;

(b) by when the post is likely to be filled up;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether it is also a fact that the selection for the post was made over a year ago; and

(d) if so,the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The post of Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is lying vacant consequent upon the superannuation of its earlier incumbent with effect from the 29th February, 2004.

(b) to (d) The Executive Committee in its meeting in July, 2005 decided to appoint a Director and identified a person for the job. The formalities in regard to the appointment are being completed.

Development of religious, archaeological and natural beauty sites

†4069. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the religious, archaeological and natural beauty sites found to be the major centres of attraction of the foreign tourists coming to India apart from Metropolitan cities;

(b) whether there is any scheme for the development of such places; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) India offers a combination of religious, archaeological and natural beauty sites spread all over the country, apart from metropolitan cities attracting foreign tourists from all over the world. A list of prominent tourist spots in India is at enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(b) and (c) Development of tourist places is primarily the responsibility of the State/UT Governments. The Department of Tourism extends central financial assistance for tourism schemes/projects prioritized in consultation with the State/UT Governments, based on *inter-se* priority and subject to availability of funds.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.